

WHY COCONINO COUNTY POTATOES ARE FAMOUS

(By De Lore Nichols, County Agricultural Agent of Coconino County.)

Potatoes have been grown in Coconino county for a number of years, but not until the last five years has it been widely known as a potato district. They were first grown near Flagstaff. The particular district first planted to potatoes is situated just at the foot of the San Francisco peaks on valley land sloping southward. It was protected on either side by abrupt mesas surrounded by forests of pine and altogether favorably located for potato growing. Coconino county is the second largest county in the United States; it is situated in the northern part of Arizona and extends from central Arizona across the Grand Canyon of the Colorado to the Utah line. As a whole the country is rough and very broken. Much of the land is what might be called desert with little vegetation. Such land, however, is used for grazing in fall and spring. The better farming and grazing land is confined to the higher elevations, especially near the San Francisco mountains. The farming land is very scattered, there being about three hundred homesteaders in the county.

The soil is of volcanic origin, is rather coarse in texture and in many places is slightly acid in nature. It is lacking in humus and limestone. Crops are grown at elevations between 6,500 and 8,500 feet. At these higher points the annual rainfall is about 24 inches. The season is very short, but during the summer season the crops grow very rapidly. On May 26, 1918, there was a severe frost which froze potato vines in some fields to the ground. These potatoes grew again, however, and produced a good crop. A frost came as early as August 14 and 15, 1918, which froze many potato plants, thus cutting down the yield. The period without frost was, therefore, in some districts last year, but 80 days.

One feature of potato culture in this section is worthy of mention and is peculiar to Coconino county. The crops are first grown under dry-farm conditions. April, May, and June are characterized by many windy days with but little rain; consequently the soil dries out rapidly. If the crops are planted and are too far advanced before the summer rains, which usually come about July 1, they are in a weakened condition, have made a small spindling growth and are too far advanced toward maturity for the rains to benefit them. On the other hand, if the soil has been worked into a good mulch on the surface to retain the moisture and the planting is begun about May 1, the crops come nicely. They develop a good root system, but the tops grow slowly until the rains come, when they develop very rapidly.

The problem, then, is to get the potatoes as well as other crops over a period of about two months of dry weather.

In the fall of 1917, when the agricultural agent reached the county there were some three thousand acres devoted to potato growing. Many of the fields were in a pitiful mixture of weeds and potatoes, as "cowboy farming" made no provision for cultivation. (An explanation of "cowboy farming" is to plant the crops in the spring and return in the fall for the harvest.) The varieties in the fields had become badly mixed. Very little selection had been made so far as could be judged. A few barrels of Early Ohio had been shipped in about five years previous. Among this seed must have been some of the Peachblow variety. The latter variety being rounder in shape and smooth was chosen for seed by the farmers. In this way they unconsciously changed over their fields from Early Ohio to Peachblow, and is doing so changed over to a higher yielding variety. The original Early Ohio potato had been awarded first prize at the Arizona State fair for the first two years under this name and by a competent judge. It was difficult to demonstrate to growers that this common round red variety they were growing was Peachblow instead of Early Ohio.

The red variety had been marketed under the name of "Coconino Red." Other fields were made up of a mixture of white varieties. The agricultural agent set about to eliminate the inferior sorts. At digging time it was very noticeable that several varieties were poor yielders, rough and undesirable for our conditions. The big problem was to make a better selection and rid the farmers of seed mixtures and to discard entirely the poor varieties.

Work was done at once to encourage the growers in the selection of seed, both by the hill-selection method and in the cellar. On several farms a man was designated to follow the digger and when a good hill came over the elevator, all the potatoes were retained for seed. This seed gave splendid results the following summer.

It was interesting to note that where hill-selected seeds were planted by the side of field-run, that, in comparatively dry soil, the hill-selected seed gave about 75 per cent stand while the others gave only about 40 per cent. It was pleasing to note that an improvement had at least begun in the fall of 1917.

During the following winter and spring the farmers not only began

to talk about seed selection, but they practiced better selection of seed. At this time conditions were favorable for each farmer had plenty of tubers due to a poor market for table stock in the spring, from which to make seed selection.

The Peachblow were given rigid selection making it possible to have certified some seed though this was not done in the fall of 1917. Other varieties of white sorts were retained and selected for quality. Among those discarded were the old-time White Star and Blue Victor.

The results of the potato seed campaign were better varieties, fewer varieties, and the treatment of seed for 324 acres. Formerly no seed dipping against disease had been given. During the summer of 1918 over 1,500 acres were inspected by the county agent in the field at blossoming time. Records on the following were taken where the fields were good: Variety, percentage of mixture, diseases, condition, etc., and where the fields were not up to standard no record was taken.

The data was recorded on printed blanks and a permanent record kept of the different fields. A further selection was made in the fall of 1918, and the same methods of 1917 were repeated with good results.

Potatoes were placed in the cellars in the fall of 1918 which showed great improvement over previous years. In several instances the marketable size were sold from the undesirable fields and the smaller sizes were left on the ground to freeze with no attempt at saving such undesirable seed. Others sold the small seed for hog feed. By these methods the farmers were ridding themselves of the undesirable types.

Seed potatoes that were sold last winter by the farmers, were very much better selected than heretofore. In every case where the farmer sold direct, the seed was hand selected. This will undoubtedly open a larger market for our seed for the coming year. Buyers now know that they can depend on fairly good selection and a square deal if the product is put out through the Farm Bureau, for it has been the Farm Bureau that has taken the lead with the county agent in the potato improvement work. The crop of 1919 is being planted from seed which has passed at least two years critical inspection. The best seed was placed in a class by itself and the entire seed crop of 1920 will be selected from this class. The poorer class will be discarded entirely.

From a beginning of 324 acres treated by the growers in 1918, 1,075 acres have been treated with corrosive sublimate this spring. At date of writing this the county agent is receiving constant calls at the office for information on the method of treatment. Seed treatment has been profitable. One farm gave at digging time 66 1/2 per cent marketable from treated seed, while the untreated produced 50 per cent. Every acre from treated seed produced more tubers which had cleaner skin, better quality, better color and greater attractiveness.

With field inspections this summer to further eliminate disease and varietal mixture, a larger percentage of the crop will be possible for certification for seed. The Peachblow variety is in some fields already 99 per cent free from varietal mixtures. Irish Cobbles are also about 99 per cent pure, and some of the other varieties are in the same class. These are two of the leading varieties for seed at present. The aim of the county is to produce nothing short of 3,000 acres of certified seed for the following year.

The local Farm Bureau is now advertising seed potatoes treated and selected. This means that the farmers stand for quality and they intend to live up to it.

In conclusion, it is hoped that Arizona, California, and New Mexico potato planters will realize that Coconino county is a potato district where seed stands for quality. California growers should look to this county for seed. Some of the varieties now grown here are the kinds in demand in Southern California and Arizona. Other varieties popular in Southern California may be imported from California and grown here for seed to supply the planters in the warmer, early potato districts. Coconino potato fields among the pines on the cool elevated slopes of the San Francisco Peaks may be counted upon to produce seed tubers of high quality.

CHINA'S DEFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS SHOWN

No country in the world has such a defective system of communication as that of China. Commercial and press telegrams which are of great importance are delayed every day while the so-called first-class telegrams, which are really of no importance at all, take the lines to their utmost capacity. Volumes of them are dispatched every day on every line. Carriers are piled sky high at many railway stations waiting for transportation. Cars are said to be unavailable; yet high officials ride back and forth comfortably in special cars without paying a cent. Hundreds of cars are available for transporting military supplies from place to place. Very heavy losses have the merchants suffered from these two causes alone.

COULDN'T HOLD UP EZRA

Extra Pinchpenny debated the matter for some time, but finally halted a jetney, got in, and separated himself from ten cents. When the driver came to a corner he put his hand out and Ezra said he'd be darned if he would. "I don't mind the additional ten cents," said Ezra, "but it's the principle of the thing."

Sailing the sea of matrimony might not be so difficult if you weren't always running into the depliants.

KAYENTA NEWS

(By Albert A. Reagan.)

June 6 Mr. Sampson, of Gallup, was here looking after his interests in the trader's store of A. Bradley, deceased, at Bitterweed Water. He also spent a few days at Kayenta.

W. H. Hughes, N. E. Miller and C. A. Phillips, of San Luis Obispo county, Cal., arrived at Kayenta June 8 on a sight-seeing and business trip relative to the purchase of cattle and the leasing of cattle range lands near Bluff. Messrs. Miller and Phillips returned with the auto via Tuba City, June 9, and Mr. Hughes continued the trip on to Bluff, Utah, with the Indian team, leaving here June 11. Mr. Miller has been an instructor in aviation in the U. S. army. He said he would like a flying job over the Navajo country.

Dick Dunaway, the U. S. water man, was here taking the government pump's temperature and pulse beats the middle of the week.

June 10 Mrs. John Straus, Julian Buckbee and daughter, Harriett, and Mrs. A. B. Reagan left in the lumber wagon for Tuba City to attend the closing exercises at the Indian school, held there on the 13th—a distance of 80 miles.

Ben Wetheril and Mr. Middleton returned June 10 and in company with Sister Wetheril they proceeded on to Oljato to look after their extensive cattle interests there on June 12. On the same day Mr. Rosink, the government veterinary, returned from Oljato where he had examined over 225 horses in a period of four days, thus breaking the year's record.

Policemen and interpreters are here from Tuba City for the purpose of appointing a policeman for this section.

It is reported that at a recent collection of delegates at a business meeting the Navajos voted to adopt a double barred flag with colors gray and rose.

It is reported that one of our citizens is planning a trip to Utah in the near future.

John Wetheril and wife and Fletcher Corrigan, formerly of the U. S. marines, returned from an extended trip outside.

Chauffeur H. B. White, John Kerley, Larry Quentin and Geo. Weaver, of Flagstaff were here on business on June 14. Dr. Rosink and John Straus returned to Tuba City with them the evening of the 15th.

MOUNTAIN LION PLENTIFUL IN MAZATZAL MOUNTAINS

Tom Cline, who pastures his cattle on the Tonto Forest Reserve in Mazatzal range in the western end of Maricopa county, says the mountain lions have been worse in that section than usual, some stockmen losing 25 per cent of the young calves and colts.

One old lion has ranged there for more than a year and he kills a calf about every other day.

Mr. Cline has just rounded up and sold his yearling steers that weighed about 550 pounds, at 7 1/2 cents a pound. The bunch brought over \$41 a head.

The range is exceedingly good and more stock would do well if permitted.

As it is the number must not be increased so steers are sold at yearlings. These go to Colorado for pasture and later to be fed out for market. Mr. Cline gathered a bunch of fat, barren cows for which he hopes to get 8 cents.

The range fees have been raised to one dollar a head, but even at this stockmen are doing well.

Mr. Cline says ranges will be good all season as the early rains have brought ample browse, the principal feed in that section.—Phoenix Messenger.

PACIFIC FLEET TO BE DISTINCT UNIT

Orders making effective the proposed division of the United States naval forces into two fleets of equal strength, one to be called the Atlantic and the other the Pacific fleet, have been issued by the navy department. Admiral Henry B. Wilson will command the Atlantic and Admiral Hugh Rodman the Pacific fleet.

Each of the two fleets will be comprised of four divisions of battleships and dreadnaughts, two divisions of cruisers, eighteen divisions of destroyers, three divisions of submarines and two divisions of mine layers.

Supply, repair, fuel and hospital ships, tugs and other auxiliaries will be equally divided between the two fleets. As the Pacific fleet heretofore has consisted of only a few battleships and some armored and light cruisers and destroyers, docking facilities and naval bases on the Pacific coast probably will have to be greatly enlarged.

ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF FARM ORGANIZATION

J. F. Jarrell, assistant manager of the agricultural section, U. S. railway administration of Albuquerque, was in Flagstaff last Saturday to attend the meeting of the Coconino County Farm Bureau. Mr. Jarrell is an enthusiastic booster of farm organizations and in the course of his conversation said:

"California is the best organized states among the farmers in the Union; but as much as has been said of Arkansas, that state comes second in farmer organizations. They have small local organizations and instead of selling their product for what they can get locally as they used to do, they now pool their product and send it to market in carload lots and by properly handling it, secure the highest market prices for it. I know the farmer has been the hardest element of all businesses to get together and organize, but they are doing it all over the country now, and I am glad to see that there seems to be a good live farmer's organization here. The organizers will never regret the work they put in this way, for it will bring wonderful results."

HE EXPLAINS

"Why do you always have your photograph taken in a hard-boiled shirt?"

"I use the white expanse of shirt front to inscribe my autograph on," explained the celebrity, "and you can't write on a soft shirt."

BIG MAGAZINE TELLS OF ARIZONA RANCH

A story which should be of particular interest to motorists of this section appears in the Country Gentleman of May 24. The story depicts the saving which has been effected in the operation of a huge truck on the Bar-T-Bar ranch, owned by J. H. Barbour, at Payson, Arizona, by switch-

ing from solid tires to Goodyear Cords.

It is now an admitted fact that hauling over roads such as we have in Arizona can be done much more economically on cord pneumatic tires than on the relatively rigid and unresilient solid tires. Practically all the large operators of truck in our state now are using Goodyear Cords, and the increased mileage and life of the trucks are surprising.

This is the season for
Tents, Tarps, Camp
Chairs, Stoves and all
Automobile Camp
Accessories

W. H. SWITZER
PHONE 94

Save For Your Rainy Day

Would we have been victorious in our great war without money to back the boys? Never! We were smart---the richest nation in the world---and why? Because we saved for a rainy day---we had the money ready.

Surely all of us are striving for success in this world but none can expect to achieve it by letting the future take care of itself. Save now and the future is made. Save till it pinches---you will never have cause to regret it.

Open an account with a bank of strength and reliability. A bank that appreciates your business and handles it accordingly. We solicit your account on that basis.

The Arizona Central Bank

Capital, Surplus and Profits \$325,000

Enjoy Your Meals, Madam

Can you really enjoy your summer meals, when you come to the table tired, overheated, oppressed with cooking odors? Can you relish your food with the contemplation of dishes to be washed and house set in order at the end of a hot energy-taxing day? And you, Mr. Husband, doesn't the idea of giving the Mrs. and the help a vacation influence you to give the family a real treat by bringing them here to eat, where you know they will enjoy real food, real service, and an appetizing environment?

Considerate husbands and sensible housewives have eliminated summer cooking at home. Eat here and you'll understand why from a standpoint of enjoyment as well as economy.

Commercial Hotel Cafe

CHAS. PROCHNOW, Prop.

JOHN LUKUS FINE SHOE REPAIRING

If you are not perfectly satisfied with the wear of our materials, bring back the shoes, and we will do the job again without any extra charge.

JOHN LUKUS
Two doors S. of Citizens Bank